

VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS

Artists in Education

2022 Teaching Artist Handbook



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Background

The Virginia Commission for the Arts is the state arts agency that support the arts through funding from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The Commission, created in 1968, is guided by thirteen Commissioners appointed to five-year terms by the Governor and confirmed by the General Assembly. The Commission's funds come from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. To ensure statewide representation, at least one Commissioner – and no more than two – is appointed from each Congressional district. A staff of five full-time and two part-time persons implements programs and policies.

Mission

To invest in the arts in the Commonwealth by supporting, celebrating, and promoting artistic and cultural equity in an innovative and creative environment to benefit all Virginians.

Vision

A creative culture in which equitable access to arts engagement and learning are fundamental to the lives of all Virginians.

Values

The arts provide unique opportunities for individual creativity and expression.

The arts should be accessible to every citizen of the Commonwealth of Virginia, whether as a creative worker, patron or student.

The arts inspire ideas, imagination and vision, and help us see our world in new and different ways.

The arts heighten and enhance learning and personal growth; they stir and awaken memories, emotions and aspirations.

The arts provide insight, empathy and understanding of diverse people, customs and expressions that bridge differences and make a coherent whole out of many disparate parts.

The arts communicate in real-time, and across generations.

The arts intensify the experience of life and the conditions that encourage and stimulate discovery, invention and innovation.

The arts provide the building blocks for a healthy and vital 21st Century creative culture in Virginia.

Guiding Principles of the Commission

ARTISTIC QUALITY

Supporting and stimulating excellence in the arts throughout Virginia is the responsibility of the Commission.

Artistic quality is the first consideration in the decision to fund any arts organization or arts activity. What constitutes artistic excellence may vary in relation to the organization's mission and goals, audiences and activities. The Commission supports artistic excellence, encourages growth in artistic quality, and works to make artistic excellence available to all Virginians.

Advisory panels make evaluations of artistic quality. The Commission chooses the panelists for their knowledge of and experience in the arts. They attend activities of the Commission grantees and have first-hand knowledge of the quality of the work of organizations.

ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

The Commission relies on a healthy, vital and productive arts infrastructure that supports Virginia's individual artists, arts entrepreneurs, businesses and institutions.

The Commission provides leadership in supporting the arts infrastructure of artists and arts professionals in their development and ability to support themselves through their work.

Additionally, the Commission supports artist retreats, access centers for equipment and studio/rehearsal space, and organizations that provide information and advisory services for individual artists.

INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND ACCESS (IDEA)

The Commission adopted the agency's first-ever *Statement on Cultural Equity* in April 2018, which states, in part:

To support a full creative life for all, the Virginia Commission for the Arts commits to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that foster a just, inclusive, and equitable Commonwealth.

The Commission strives to make quality arts experiences available and accessible to all Virginians, regardless of age, ability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, geographic location, religion, socioeconomic status, or citizenship status. The Commission supports existing arts organizations in all parts of the Commonwealth and encourages new organizations that serve people with limited access to the arts.

All applicants are expected to consider the needs and abilities of special populations, as informed by ability, age, gender, race, and socio-economic status, and more, when planning their programs.

The Commission believes that the arts are a primary vehicle through which we celebrate the diverse cultures of this country. As such, the Commission funds arts organizations, artists, and arts activities that preserve and present the many cultures of contemporary life in the Commonwealth.

Commission grantees are expected to actively seek racial, ethnic, and/or cultural diversity in their artists, audiences, boards, and staff. Applications for funding should fully describe all efforts to cultivate this diversity.

In addition, the Commission makes a significant investment in performing arts touring each year as a way of increasing the availability of high-quality arts throughout the Commonwealth.

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in being a member of Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) Teaching Artist Roster. The field of teaching artistry is critical to arts education and lifelong learning. The Roster is an online, searchable database of professional Teaching Artists. Artists are reviewed by a panel of peers, and recommended for engagement in VCA grant-funded projects and programs.

Artists must apply to the Roster by either the October 1 or April 1 deadlines. If the 1st falls on a weekend, the application deadline is the following Monday. Roster applications are accepted through Foundant, our online grant system. All applications are reviewed by a panel of professional peers who make recommendations to the Commission. Recommendations are presented to the Commission Board at their December and June meetings (in keeping with the fiscal year). Once approved, Teaching Artists must complete a background check, and if accepted will be included on the Roster, which is housed on the VCA's website. Please take the time to review the application materials and processes outlined in this Handbook. Read all of the materials carefully before submitting your application.

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ARTISTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM SYNOPSIS

The Artists in Education Program is steeped in the belief that the arts heighten and enhance learning and personal growth. The Commission believes lifelong learning in the arts is essential to the development of aesthetic awareness and a healthy life and living. Roster artists are Teaching Artists who facilitate learning experiences, typically in residencies through school and community-based settings, such as school programs, camps, youth and adult workshops, professional development or master classes. Learning can take place through in-person, virtual (synchronous or asynchronous), or hybrid models. Discipline-based residencies are offered across generations, and vary in length depending on the needs of the sponsor/site and the overall residency program goals.

ARTISTS IN EDUCATION GRANTS

Artists in Education (AIE) grants provide opportunities for Virginia's students, educators and other adult populations to participate in, and learn through the arts, by working with highly-qualified, professional artists in support of lifelong learning. These grants provide Virginia's Pre-K-12 students, teachers, and other adult populations opportunities to work with artists in an in-school, after-school or other community setting, including summer activities. AIE grants may support educational programs in the arts that enhance arts instruction in the school curriculum, professional development for professional artists and educators to work with elementary and secondary school students, or other adult populations in community settings, meeting identified learning goals. Synchronous or asynchronous virtual learning, with a specific Virginia population is eligible.

Online applications are due by April 1, and submitted online via Foundant, our online grant portal. Residencies must take place between July 1 and June 15. Applicants may request a maximum of \$7,500, and applicant organizations must provide at least a 1:1 cash match of the grant award. For a list of eligible activities and more information regarding the Artists in Education grant program, visit the [AIE program page](#) on our website.

ARTISTS IN EDUCATION EXPRESS GRANTS

This category is a non-competitive grant program. The Artists in Education Express (AIE) program provides support to eligible Virginia Pre-K – 12 schools, not-for profit organizations, and units of government for short-term residencies focused on participatory and experiential learning conducted by professional Teaching Artists. VCA Roster Teaching Artists who are permanent Virginia residents can also apply directly for up to two (2) AIE grants per grant cycle. Proposed residency activities take place from August through June. AIE funding is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications are reviewed in-house, by staff, in the order in which they are received.

AIE applications are available online July 1 thru April 15 (or until funds are exhausted), via Foundant, our online grants portal. Applicants may request a maximum amount of \$1,500 and must provide a 15% cash match. For example, an applicant requesting the maximum of \$1,500 would need to provide a cash match of \$225. Funds will be available until they are fully committed. Funds are processed within 30 days of the AIE residency start date. A final report is required. For more information, visit the [AIE program page](#) on our website.

Eligible Activities:

- *Short-term (maximum 20 hours) active, participatory residency in school or community setting, not to exceed 20 hours.*
- *Residency activities that include workshops or demonstrations with a participatory component, or community projects.*
- *Synchronous and/or asynchronous virtual learning with a specific Virginia-based population.*

TEACHING ARTISTS

Teaching Artists are “artist-educators,” experienced in translating their creative processes within instructional settings. Eric Booth, a nationally recognized author and Teaching Artist, developed the following definition: “A teaching artist is a practicing professional artist with the complementary skills and sensibilities of an educator, who engages people in learning experiences in, through, and about the arts.” Teaching Artists represent all disciplines including craft, dance, literary arts, media arts, music, storytelling, theatre, visual arts, folk/traditional arts, and multicultural arts.

Professional Teaching Artists are an invaluable resource for schools and communities, and greatly contribute to the overall process of learning. In addition they are:

- *accomplished in their field;*
- *able to teach their art discipline(s) and demonstrate professional competency with organizational skills, classroom management, public speaking and knowledge of how various educational systems operate (schools, social service agencies, juvenile detention centers, community centers, etc.);*
- *business-minded, possessing the ability to self-market, work within a budget, and deliver projects on-time and in the manner proposed;*
- *effective communicators and able to facilitate conversations with teachers, community leaders and other individuals through the process of creating and designing educational projects; and*
- *lifelong learners, as leaders and participants in community events, classes and workshops.*

BENEFITS OF ROSTER INCLUSION

VCA Roster Teaching Artists may expect the following benefits:

Promotion of work as a Teaching Artist or Arts Organization (with a related roster of artists)

VCA promotes the Roster online via our website. Each Teaching Artist has a separate webpage, and can refer to this web presence to showcase their residency work and designation as a VCA Roster Artist. VCA creates the individual artist webpage content based on the Teaching Artist's submitted web content. The current VCA Teaching Artist Roster can be accessed [here](#).

Access to Professional Networking and Resources

AIE program staff support Roster artists by informing them about a variety of arts education resources and opportunities, including national trends and research, workshops and other professional development opportunities.

Increased connections to VCA grantees

Applicants to AIE grants are strongly encouraged to select Roster artists. When opportunities arise, and as appropriate, the VCA recommends Teaching Artists for proposed projects.

TEACHING ARTIST ROSTER

The primary purpose of the VCA Teaching Artist Roster is to identify and promote highly-qualified and experienced Teaching Artists who have particular expertise working in schools and other community-based settings. The Roster is an online resource for applicants of the VCA's AIE grants, as well as for any other school or community groups seeking professional Teaching Artists to work with their students, teachers, and other adult groups. Although the VCA promotes the Roster to applicants and others, the Commission does not guarantee contract work to our Teaching Artists.

A secondary purpose of the Roster is to promote and support professional development for educators. Teaching in and through the arts is a complex, professional and growing field, where support and training is always needed. VCA advances the field of Teaching Artists by working to improve and expand arts learning experiences for Pre-K-12 students and adults.





ROSTER ELIGIBILITY

Individual Teaching Artists as well as not-for-profit arts organizations who provide educational programming and employ Teaching Artists can apply to the Roster. Full-time students are ineligible to apply to the Teaching Artist Roster.

INDIVIDUAL TEACHING ARTIST APPLICANTS

Teaching Artist Roster applicants must be:

- 18 years of age or older at the time of applying;
- a resident of Virginia, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia, and/or the District of Columbia;
- a professional artist with expertise in one or more arts disciplines;
- skilled in working with children, youth, teachers, adults, seniors, veterans, and/or other populations; and
- committed to differentiated instruction and effective teaching methods to reach all learners.

ORGANIZATIONAL TEACHING ARTIST APPLICANTS

Organizational Artist Roster applicants must be a not-for-profit arts organization:

- based in Virginia, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia, and/or the District of Columbia;
- that delivers discipline-specific educational programming with the assistance of trained Teaching Artists;
- skilled in working with children, youth, teachers, adults, seniors, veterans, and/or other populations; and
- committed to differentiated instruction and effective teaching methods to reach all learners.

APPLICATION RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

Teaching Artists and arts organizations are eligible to be on the Teaching Artist Roster for three consecutive years, and the following are required for Roster renewal.

1. Profile Resubmission

To maintain status, artists must resubmit their profile every three years to support active participation. This is not a full application, but only a profile update. The resubmission of the profile will serve as a means for Roster renewal. Applicants will be notified via email of this requirement at the appropriate time.

2. VCA AIE Residency

All VCA Roster Teaching Artists will be required to conduct at least one VCA residency within the three-year cycle. Active participation includes evidence of a contracted residency.

3. Professional Development Activity

As a part of the Roster renewal process, the VCA requires that Teaching Artists participate in at least one professional development activity within the three-year cycle.

This may include any of the following:

- *attendance at a training or workshop specifically for Teaching Artists;*
- *attendance at a conference related to arts education or a chosen artistic discipline;*
- *taking a class to improve or expand their practice as an artist;*
- *observing or assisting another professional Teaching Artist; and*
- *participating in any other professional learning experience that improves your work as a Teaching Artist.*

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Each teaching artist approved by the Commission for the Teaching Artist Roster is required to undergo a criminal background check. Background checks ensure that the Commission has performed its due diligence to the fullest extent possible, as teaching artists are properly vetted, to work with Pre-K-12 students, life-long learners, and/or potentially (other) vulnerable populations. All criminal background checks are confidential. Background checks will be conducted with the Virginia State Police to determine whether a teaching artist has a criminal history in Virginia, including that as a sex offender. The Commission will contract with a third-party vendor to determine a U.S. criminal record outside of the Commonwealth. Fieldprint, or whatever successor vendor is contracted through the Virginia State Police will be used for conducting the background checks.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK CONTINUED

1. Consideration of Information Obtained | Convictions and other information disclosed by candidates or revealed through background checks will influence the hiring decision only if considered by the Commission to be relevant to the duties of the position and the Commission's responsibilities to the public and public funding. For convictions and other past conduct deemed potentially relevant, the following will be considered:

- the nature and severity of the offense or conduct,
- the nature of the possible assignments of the Teaching Artist, and populations with whom they would engage, and/or
- a candidate's explanation of a past event and other contextual information, including the candidate's age at the time the event or conduct occurred and the time elapsed since. If the Commission denies approval based on criminal background check information (other than information solely disclosed by the candidate) or any other information provided by a consumer reporting agency, the Commission will notify the candidate in accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

2. Consideration of Offenses | Examples of offenses which are considered unacceptable for working with children/youth, seniors and/or other vulnerable populations include, but may not be limited to:

- Offenses or cases involving care or treatment of other persons
- Misdemeanor offenses or cases involving violence, or drug and alcohol offenses within the past seven years.
- Felony offenses or cases involving violence or sex
- Other felony offenses such as embezzlement, theft, drugs, within the past ten years

This shall include persons who have been found guilty or entered a plea of guilty or no contest. This listing of examples of offenses is not exhaustive and other offenses may be considered unacceptable. For offenses not listed below, evaluations will be made on a case-by-case basis. **Shall include prior adult offenses, juvenile offenses, and adjudication of delinquency**

3. Confidentiality and Reporting | Information will be collected and handled confidentially by designated Commission staff—the Executive Director, Deputy Director and Arts in Education Coordinator. Information will be retained only as required by law, and will not become part of any individual's personnel file.

In accordance with direction given to the Commission by the Department of Human Resources and Management (DHRM), the Commission will maintain a list of these artists with documentation of when/how their background checks were conducted and that they successfully passed.

Following FBI regulations, the Commission will destroy all criminal background checks once they have served their purpose of determining a criminal background of a teaching artist. The Commission will retain a note in each teaching artists' file. Notes for rejected teaching artists will state that the artists had an unfavorable background check. Notes for accepted teaching artists will indicate the date of the reports and that the criminal background history revealed no areas of concern. DHRM only records employees in "sensitive positions" and does not record independent contractors in the Personnel Management Information System (PMIS) system. The Commission may seek the advice of the Attorney General's office with respect to any artist who is identified for rejection due to an unfavorable background check and/or who the Commission approves for the Teaching Artist Roster who has a criminal background, and it shall seek such advice prior to advising the artist of their eligibility.

The Commission will absorb the costs for the background checks. It is recommended that schools and organizations also conduct separate background checks at their own costs for individuals working within their arts education programs with children/youth and/or other vulnerable populations.



APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Teaching Artist Roster application can be viewed online before any information is submitted. You can begin by going to Foundant, our grant portal, and create a new account. After creating a new account, click on the “apply” tab located on the menu bar at the top of the applicant dashboard page. The “apply” tab will open a page where all applications can be accessed. Scroll down to locate the Teaching Artist Roster application. Click on the “apply” tab to access the application and list of questions. To download a PDF of the document click on the “question list” tab and the file will download for access.

The application includes the following sections:

- *Teaching Artist/Arts Organization Contact Information*
- *Teaching Artist/Arts Organization Experience*
- *Support Documentation for Individuals and Arts Organization*
 - *residency plan*
 - *resume(s) for key Teaching Artists*
 - *one (1) workshop sample or lesson plan*
 - *three (3) artistic excellence samples*
 - *two (2) instructional aptitude samples (photos, video, audio that demonstrate the instructional strengths of the Teaching Artist(s))*
- *Two Recent Letters of Reference*
- *Background Check and Certification.*

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE-WORK SAMPLES

The choice of work samples supporting artistic excellence is critical. The technical quality of the samples should allow for clear viewing of and/or listening to the work(s). These work samples should be chosen to demonstrate artistic and instructional excellence. Teaching Artists are required to submit at least three work samples. These can be shared in various formats. Applications not containing the requirements for each discipline will be considered incomplete and ineligible. Only include works completed in the last three years.



CREATIVE WRITING, FICTION, AND POETRY

Three writing samples not to exceed 10 pages.

Include:

- The title of the work
- Date completed



CRAFTS, DESIGN, VISUAL ARTS

Three image samples required.

Include:

- The title of the work
- Date completed
- Materials/media of work



THEATRE, DANCE, STORYTELLING, INTERDISCIPLINARY

Three video samples not to exceed five minutes each.

Include:

- The title of the work
- Date completed



MUSIC, MEDIA ARTS

Three video or audio samples not to exceed five minutes each.

Include:

- The title of the work
- Composer and librettist's name (if a musical recording)
- Date completed

INSTRUCTIONAL APTITUDE SAMPLES

Teaching Artist and arts organization instructional aptitude samples highlight the active experience of the Teaching Artist with an audience. These examples provide some evidence and insight into the instructional aptitude of the Teaching Artist. Professionally produced work samples are not required; however, the visual/audio quality should be clear and audible. Applications not containing the minimum requirements of two (2) Teaching Artist samples will be considered incomplete and ineligible. Only include Teaching Artist samples completed in the last three years.



TEACHING ARTIST SAMPLES

Two visual/video samples that support instructional aptitude.

Include:

- A brief description of the audience
- A brief description of the activity
- Date completed

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applicants will be reviewed according to the following criteria. Applicants should give careful consideration to each item. Each area will be rated using a 10 point numerical scale, from 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest.

Professionalism

- Teaching Artist application is complete and includes all required items
- Application narratives are concise and clear, and questions are fully addressed
- Application is professionally presented

Artistic Excellence

- Competency in discipline(s) supported
- Demonstrates excellent ability to communicate knowledge about their own work
- Professional work samples

Instructional Aptitude

- Ability to effectively articulate ideas, concepts, instructions, processes, which are related to their artistic discipline
- Demonstrate knowledge of effective methods for pedagogy, lesson planning, and the use of diverse instructional strategies.

Curriculum and Lesson Planning

- Ability to develop lesson plans, aligned with state standards when applicable
- Ability to establish age and developmentally appropriate arts learning goals

Program Management

- Evidence to support effective program planning and implementation
- Ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with classroom teachers, administrators, or other teaching artists
- Ability to design and implement effective and appropriate methods for assessing student learning or benchmark program goals

NOTIFICATION

All Teaching Artists will be notified via Foundant, immediately following VCA action at the June or December Commission meetings.

IMAGE CREDITS

Cover

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Richmond

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Manassas

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Performance and Teaching Artist Christylez Bacon

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Manassas



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